

2.4 Natural Resources

Main Idea Natural resources are central to economic development and basic human needs.

What materials make up a pencil? Wood comes from trees. The material that you write with is a mineral called graphite. The pencil is made from natural resources, which are materials on Earth that people use to live and to meet their needs.

Earth's Resources

There are two kinds of natural resources. Biological resources are living things, such as livestock, plants, and trees. These resources are important to humans because they provide us with food, shelter, and clothing.

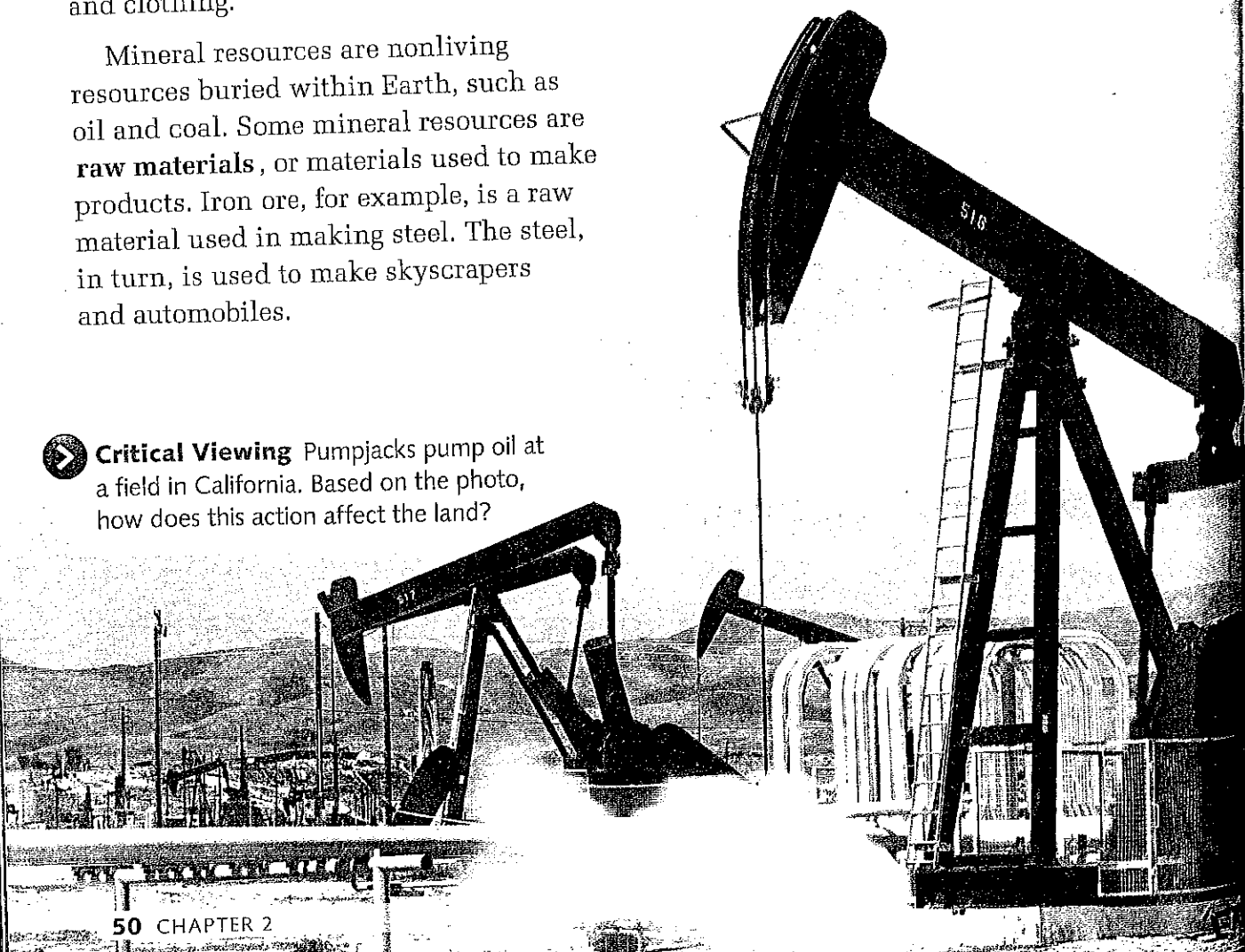
Mineral resources are nonliving resources buried within Earth, such as oil and coal. Some mineral resources are **raw materials**, or materials used to make products. Iron ore, for example, is a raw material used in making steel. The steel, in turn, is used to make skyscrapers and automobiles.

➤ **Critical Viewing** Pumpjacks pump oil at a field in California. Based on the photo, how does this action affect the land?

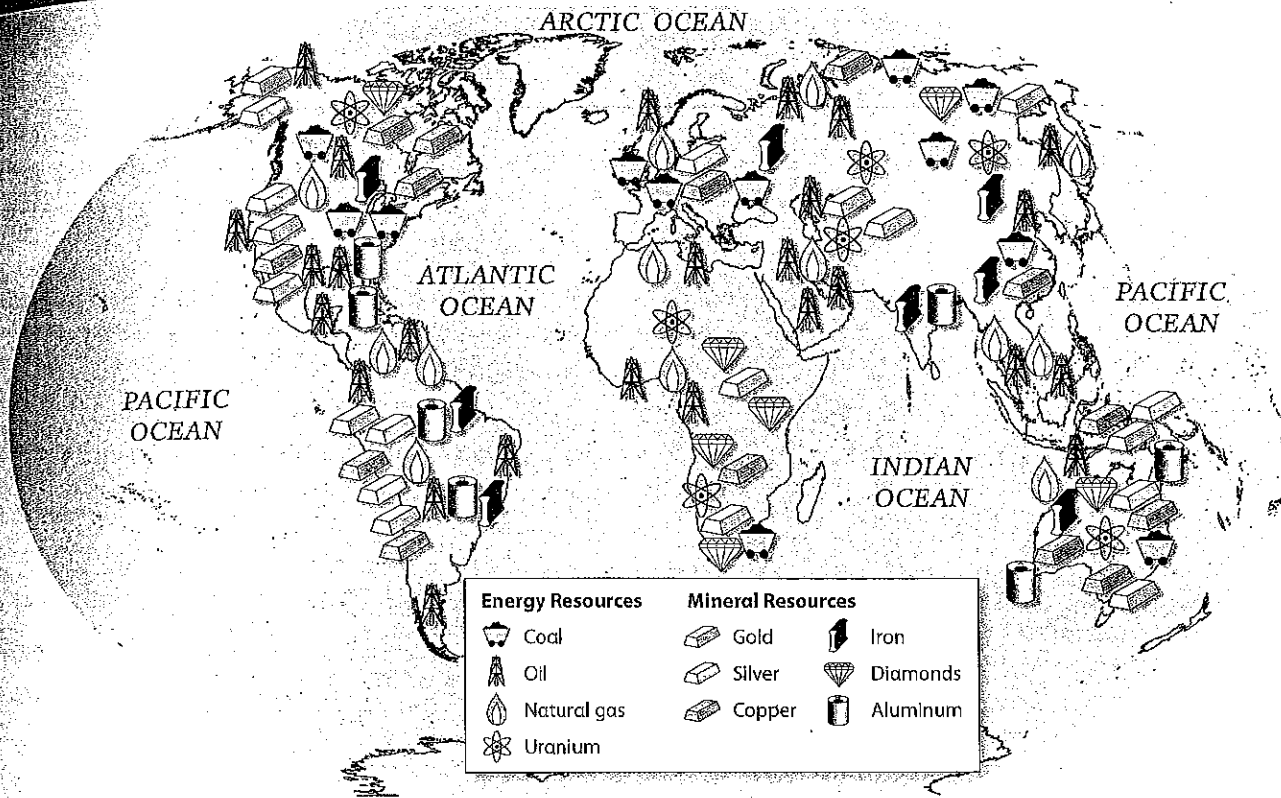
Categories of Resources

Geographers classify resources in two categories. **Nonrenewable resources** are resources that are limited and cannot be replaced. For example, oil comes from wells that are drilled into Earth's crust. Once a well runs dry, the oil is gone. Coal and natural gas are other examples of nonrenewable resources.

Renewable resources never run out, or a new supply develops over time. Wind, water, and solar power are all renewable. So are trees because a new supply can grow to replace those that have been cut down.



SELECTED NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE WORLD



Natural resources are an important part of everyday life, yet countries with a large supply are not always wealthy. Nigeria, for example, is a major supplier of oil, but seven out of every ten Nigerians live in poverty. Japan is one of the wealthiest countries in the world—yet it must import oil from other countries.

Before You Move On

Monitor Comprehension Why are natural resources important?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

MAP LAB



Geography

- 1. Interpret Maps** Copper is in demand for electric wiring and other uses. What part of the world do you think benefits from the demand for copper? Why?
- 2. Location** Where are supplies of oil found in the world? How do these supplies impact people living in these regions?
- 3. Describe Geographic Information** What are examples of a biological and a mineral resource? How are these examples different?

